MEMORANDUM

I agree with Cindy's analysis - this district needs watermaster control - not decision-making from afar via the telephone -SL Deputy Regional Mgr's

December 9, 1996

TO: Water District 57D

FROM: Cindy Hodges CJH

RE: End-of-Year Activity and Review of Watermaster Report

In June of this year, I included in this file a memo which relayed information that Mr. Hulet and Mr. Nettleton appeared to be initiating Sinker Creek water deliveries on their own. Because I believed that the first Watermaster call was imminent, I requested the Watermaster be appointed so that she would be on hand without delay at the time she was formally called. Ms. Blackstock's appointment was issued June 27, 1996.

On July 7, Steve Lester received a phone call from Mr. Hulet requesting guidance on a delivery issue which should have been directed to the Watermaster.

On several occasion throughout the season, I received phone calls from Mary Blackstock, requesting technical assistance or procedural advice. This is typical for this drainage and not of concern. However, I also received a number of calls directly from Mr. Hulet and Mr. Nettleton. In most cases, the topic of these calls were disagreements over the division of flows at the head of Murphy Mutual Canal. Each time, I reminded the individuals that the Watermaster was the appropriate contact for delivery disputes.

On October 30, 1996, Jay Hulet phoned and requested permission to close Hulet Reservoir one day in advance of the standard storage season. I denied the request verbally and then in writing.

On November 6, Mr. Hulet phoned a second time, inquiring if he might *open* the reservoir headgate, because he still had some irrigation to do and he needed to do some repairs. He also wanted to know if Paul Nettleton still had the right to divert water from the canal after November 1. The only answer I provided was to reiterate that IDWR assumes no jurisdiction in Murphy Mutual Canal, and also that the irrigation season was over.

Towards the end of November, John Westra asked me to review the Watermaster Report submitted by Mary Blackstock. Unlike previous years' reports, this one shows 1996 deliveries and charges only to Mr. Hulet. Included with the report are several pages of notes made by Mary throughout the summer, which indicate that she was called to duty by Mr. Hulet around July 10, and documenting mostly phone conversations after that time with Mr. Hulet, Mr. Nettleton, and with me.

It appears that Sinker Creek Water District experienced a modified mode of operation this season which was evidently experimental, but which turned out to be a step backward from the progress we have made so far in the District. The Watermaster's role was primarily advisory, with verbal instructions given over the telephone. The gatehouse at Hulet Reservoir was not secured by the Watermaster at the beginning of the season, and controls were operated primarily by Mr. Hulet. On the few occasions that the Watermaster made field visits, these visits were charged to Mr. Hulet. It does not appear that field measurements were taken for other diversions.

This plan of operation was not sanctioned by IDWR. Early in the season it was tolerable. However, the presence of repeated late-season disputes clearly confirms my earlier prediction that Water District 57D will not continue to operate smoothly without Watermaster control. This District will never be without dispute, however, the number of delivery-related calls received by me from water users during this season was unacceptable. To decrease reliance on the Watermaster only results in an increased reliance on IDWR, and this entirely defeats the purpose of the Water District.

Neither the Watermaster or the water users should be reprimanded for their actions this past season. The Watermaster's report of deliveries should not be changed unless it is challenged during the upcoming Water District meeting. The lesson learned must be simply to not repeat this strategy for the 1997 season. The Watermaster on Sinker Creek must be willing and able to be on call (within 24 hours), on-site, and performing a full range of duties with each visit in order to properly document priority deliveries without significant waste of water. The gatehouse at Hulet Reservoir must be under Watermaster lock and control during the irrigation season (presently April 1 to November 1) each year, except when Hulet reservoir is spilling. Other special conditions (i.e. controlled releases) may require the gatehouse to be secured prior to irrigation season. This is the protocol which has been developed over the past five years, and further deviations from it will not be allowable without advance Department approval.